

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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SUBJECT: PCI LINE STIFFENS

1. FOLLOWING DIRECTORATE MEETING JANUARY 24, PCI ISSUED RESOLUTION WHICH IS NOTABLE CHIEFLY FOR HARSH ATTITUDE, TAKEN TOWARD GOVERNMENT IN WAKE OF PARTY'S PROMISES FOR NEW (SOFT) TYPE OF OPPOSITION IN CONTEXT OF COUNTRY'S BESETTING ECONOMIC ILLS AND PCI'S CALL FOR HISTORIC COMPROMISE WITH CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. RESOLUTION STOPS SAFELY SHORT OF URGING DOWNFALL OF CURRENT CENTER LEFT GOVERNMENT BUT IT IS MOST CRITICAL STATEMENT TO DATE OF GOVERNMENT'S WEAKNESSES AND FAILURES AS SEEN BY COMMUNIST LEADERSHIP. MOST LIKELY EXPLANATION OFR PCI SHIFT WOULD APPEAR TO BE PIQUE OVER DC DECISION TO GO THROUGH WITH DIVORCE REFERENDUM AND PRESSURE FROM UNIONS AND PARTY RANK AND FILE STEMMING FROM ECONOMIC SITUATION.

2. DIRECTORATE RESOLUTION IS LARGELY A CATALOGUE OF PRESSING ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES (RISING PRICES, LOOMING UNEMPLOYMENT, SCARCE SUPPLY OF SOME NECESSITY ITEMS, ENERGY CRISIS) PLUS AN EXHORTATION TO MOVE AHEAD ON REFORMS AND MAKE GOOD ON PROMISES CONCERNING PENSIONS AND INVESTMENT IN AGRICULTURE AND MEZZOGIRONO. GOVERNMENT IS ACCUSED OF INERTIA AND INADEQUACY

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ACROSS THE BOARD. RESOLUTION URGES NECESSITY OF ADOPTING ARTIFICIAL

("POLITICAL") PRICES FOR CERTAIN FOODSTUFFS AND HOLDING THE LINE ON PUBLIC SERVICE RATES AND RENTS. STATEMENT ALSO MAKES RITUAL NOD TOWARD NEO-FASCIST DANGER WHICH IS SAID TO BE EXPLOITING PRESENT SORRY STATE OF AFFAIRS. FINALLY, STATEMENT COMES TO PRICKLY QUESTION OF REFERENDUM WHICH IT ALLEGES WILL BE EXPLOITED BY MSI TO PURSUE ANTI-DEMOCRATIC AIMS AND TO TRY TO BREAK OUT OF ITS POLITICAL ISOLATION. MSI THIRST FOR RERERENDUM, FURTHERMORE, DEMONSTRATES CORRECTNESS OF PCI EFFORTS TO AVOID IT AND ILLUMINATES GRAVITY OF DC DECISION TO GO AHEAD. AT SAME TIME, STATEMENT CONTINUES, EFFORTS MUST BE MADE TO MOBILIZE THE MASSES TO WIN THE REFERENDUM TEST.

3. OPERATIVE PARTY OF RESOLUTION CALLS FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY, A NEW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND A CAMPAIGN AGAINST FASCISTS. MASSES ARE EXHORTED TO INTENSIFY ANTI-FASCIST VIGILANCE, SUPPORT THE WORKER'S STRUGGLE FOR NEW ECONOMIC COURSE AND FORCE RESOLUTION OF COUNTRY'S PROBLEMS.

4. COMMENT: RASPING TONE OF DIRECTORATE RESOLUTION STANDS OUT IN CONTRAST TO SOOTHING NOISES OF QUALIFIED COOPERATION WHICH HAD BEEN STANDARD PCI ATTITUDE TOWARD RUMOR GOVERNMENT. IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT PARTY LEADERSHIP TO THE VERY END HAS UNREALISTICALLY EXPECTED DC TTVINITIATE COMPROMISE ON DIVORCE ISSUE. IN ADDITION, PROSPECTS FOR WORSENING ECONOMIC SITUATION INVOLVING HIGHER PRICES, SHORTAGES AND UNEMPLOYMENT ARE OBVIOUSLY A FACTOR IN PCI'S HARDENING POSTURE. RESOLUTION, HOWEVER, DOES NOT CALL FOR FALL OF GOVERNMENT AND IT SEEMS UNLIKELY, GIVEN THE PCI'S FEAR OF THE "FASCIST

DANGER", THAT THE LEADERSHIP WOULD ABANDON HISTORIC COMPROMISE FORMULA AND EMBARK ON A COURSE OF OUTRIGHT OPPOSITION UNLESS PRESSURE ON THE PCI GETS CONSIDERABLY WORSE. MOREOVER, PARTY SECRETARY BERLINGUER'S PRESTIGE IS RIDING ON THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE AND IF IT IS SCUTTLED, IT WOULD BE A BLOW TO HIS LEADERSHIP. JUST HOW FAR PCI INTENDS TO GO IN HARDENING UP ITS OPPOSITION TO THE GOVERNMENT WILL BEAR CLOSE WATCHING OVER NEXT FEW MONTHS. ONE INDICATOR OF PARTY'S ATTITUDE MAY BE POSITION IT TAKES ON QUESTION OF GENERAL STRIKE WHICH IS SCHEDULED TO BE DECIDED FEBRUARY 12. VOLPE

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